

VSP Public Comment

From: Mike Cohen [mikecohen@sprintmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, June 22, 2005 11:08 PM
To: Secretary of State, Constituent Affairs
Subject: California Voting Machine Technology

Dear Mr. McPherson:

Please save democracy by providing Accessible Voter Verified Paper Ballots that provide an auditable trail by being printed on archivable paper in easily readable font. The audit trails must be clear enough that county-trained vote counters may handle and read them quickly, and they must preserve our confidentiality. Diebold has proposed nothing of the kind and is a disaster in the making.

Diebold has submitted AVVPAT (supposedly Accessible Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail) technology for certification. Do NOT certify it for California! It is INaccessible, NOT voter verified, and not a reliable trail. Affordable hand counts would not be possible with Diebold's thermal paper and miniature type. You will end up paying Diebold fortunes to do such hand counts. Afterall, by law, Diebold corporation must prioritize profit over the public interest.

Another reason to reject Diebold is that the thermal paper, far from being of archival quality, disintegrates quickly. Also, Diebold would abuse voters' privacy by using continuous rolls with the order being exposed, thus identifying voters.

Diebold's history proves that it is not a trustworthy corporation. Of the several corporations that manufacture voting machines, Diebold has especially made a laughing stock of democracy in the U.S.A. Americans have lost trust in our elections. We need paper ballots, counted and re-counted by hand in public. Absentee ballots, counted promptly and publicly, could serve as an interim measure.

Any voting systems approved for use in California after January 1, 2005 shall have a AVVPAT that conforms to the adopted Standards

The AVVPAT shall be printed on single sheet non-thermal paper, one record of vote per sheet

Every recorded vote, no matter how recorded, shall have a AVVPAT copy

The AVVPAT record of the vote shall be printed in a minimum of 12 font

The AVVPAT shall be printed and organized to be easily read by both the voter and election officials

The AVVPAT during the 1% manual audit and any recount shall be physically verified and hand counted only

The recorded vote choices on the AVVPAT shall not be audited or recounted by automatic or electronic methods

There shall not be a method by which any particular voting record can be connected to any particular voter

Any AVVPAT spoiled or rejected by a voter because of a voting system error shall not be counted as a spoiled ballot under the two spoiled ballots limit

It is also important that the same committee chairpersons also hear regarding other important aspects of the voting process that needs to be codified. One of the more important ones is the need for clarification and specification of how the 1% manual audit should be conducted. Two important changes that need to take place are:

The percentage of precincts to be audited shall be

increased to 5%

The precincts shall be chosen by lot or some other random method by the Election Observer Panel in public

All votes in a particular precinct chosen shall be included in the audit, no matter how they are recorded

All votes must be verified by hand counting a paper record of those votes

The recorded vote on paper shall be the official record if there is a discrepancy between the electronic totals and the manually determined totals.

Mike Cohen